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AI Re-appears in Wild Birds

2007

Approved by:

Bobby Richey Jr., Agricultural Counselor
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Sabine M. Lieberz

Report Highlights:

On June 24, 2007, the German Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection (BMELV) reported six new cases of HPAI (H5N1) in wild birds in Nuremberg, a city in Bavaria, southern Germany. Three additional cases were confirmed in Saxony on June 26. This is the first appearance of the disease in Germany since August 2006.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Berlin [GM1]
[GM]

New H5N1 Cases Confirmed

On June 24, 2007, the German reference laboratory *Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut* (FLI) confirmed high pathogen avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in a Canada goose and five mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) that had been found dead in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg on June 22, 2007. In addition, three more swans were confirmed positive in Saxony on June 26. An additional four animals are currently being tested. Protection and surveillance zones around the sites where the birds were found were established immediately¹. These cases are the first appearance of HPAI in wild birds in Germany since August 2006. In 2006, Germany witnessed confirmed cases of H5N1 in 344 wild birds, three cats, a marten and one commercial turkey flock.

The cases in Bavaria received special media attention because they occurred in a popular recreational area within the city limits of Nuremberg, that is heavily frequented by families and children. As a result, the city of Nuremberg put out a larger protection zone than required by law.

German Government Holds Press Conference

In a press conference on June 27, called to discuss the new HPAI cases, Federal Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection, Horst Seehofer, stressed the importance to remain vigilant concerning the disease in order to prevent its spread to commercial flocks or human beings. At the same time he warned the public not to become hysterical.

During the same press conference, FLI stated that they view the current cases as consistent with their most recent risk assessment of April 26, 2007. That risk assessment concluded that the virus may still be prevalent in the wild bird population but on a low level. Currently, FLI sees no need to raise the risk level again and considers the high protection measures that are in place since the outbreaks in 2006 to be sufficient.

Current German AI Risk Assessment

In its most recent risk assessment of April 26, 2007, FLI concluded that the virus may still be prevalent in the wild bird population but on a low level. As a result, FLI had reduced the risk level attributed to wild birds from high to moderate. In detail the FLI risk assessment stated the following risk levels:

- Infection through illegal imports: high
- Infection through resident wild birds: moderate
- Infection through migratory birds: low
- Infection through vehicles: low
- Infection through legal imports: negligible

Protection Measures and Future Regulatory Changes

The current strict German protection measures include a general requirement to keep poultry indoors. Exception from this requirement can be granted by the local authorities for non-risks areas. The rule for defining risk areas is laid down in a federal regulation. In reaction to the FLI April risk assessment, it was proposed to transfer the authority to define risk areas

¹ As a result of a reported suspected HPAI case, routinely, a 3 km protection zone is established for 21 days and a 10 km surveillance zone for 30 days. In the protection zone

- transport of birds, poultry and poultry meat is prohibited,
- birds and poultry have to be kept indoors,
- commercial poultry farms may only be entered by farm personnel and vets,
- mats with disinfectants have to be placed at the entrances and exits of poultry holdings, and
- cats and dogs are prohibited from roaming freely.

from the federal to the state level. Reportedly, this was done to accommodate the states request for more authority. The final vote on the respective law is scheduled for July 6, 2007.

Despite the current incidents, both BMELV and FLI stated in the above mentioned press conference that they felt comfortable with the proposed change to go ahead. Should the situation change drastically, BMELV can always put in place Germany wide emergency measures that would limit state exemptions.

Key Facts on the Poultry Sector in Germany

In 2006, Germany produced 1.03 million MT of poultry meat and 804,000 MT or 13 billion pieces of eggs². The production value at the producer level amounted to US\$ 1.66 billion (1.1 billion Euro) for poultry plus US\$ 680 million (544 million Euro) for eggs. In total, poultry and egg production holds a 4.4 percent share of the total German agricultural production.

According to the animal census carried out in May 2005, Germany reports a total of 120.6 million live poultry animals. Broken down this represents 107 million chickens, thereof 50 million laying hens and chicks and 57 million broilers, plus 11 million turkeys, 2.4 million ducks, and 329,500 geese.

The top five poultry producing states are Lower-Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt, and Saxony, with 44, 9, 8, 7 and 7 percent of the poultry population, respectively.

Table: Poultry numbers in Bavaria, Saxony, and Germany in May 2005*

	Germany	Bavaria	Saxony
Chickens	107 million	9 million	7.8 million
Turkeys	11 million	659,900	223,900
Ducks	2.4 million	91,700	14,100
Geese	329,500	9,300	39,300
Total Poultry	120.6 million	9.8 million	8.04 million

* Latest available data

Source: German Federal Office of Statistics, Wiesbaden

Related reports:

Report		Title	Date released
GM6015	Germany	AI confirmed in a Commercial Poultry Farm - Consumer Reaction Limited	04/07/2006
GM6011	Germany	AI Update: AI confirmed in cats and suspected in a beech marten	03/10/2006

² This includes edible eggs and hatching eggs.

GM6008	Germany	AI update: 127 cases in wild birds none in domestic poultry	03/02/2006
GM6007	Germany	AI among wild birds reaches German mainland	02/21/2006
GM6005	Germany	AI Confirmed in Two Dead Swans in Northern Germany	02/16/2006
GM5042	Germany	Avian Influenza Update: Free Range Chicken Allowed Outside Again	12/19/2005
GM5035	Germany	AI-Threat: German Poultry Must Stay Inside - But Only in Certain Regions	09/12/2005